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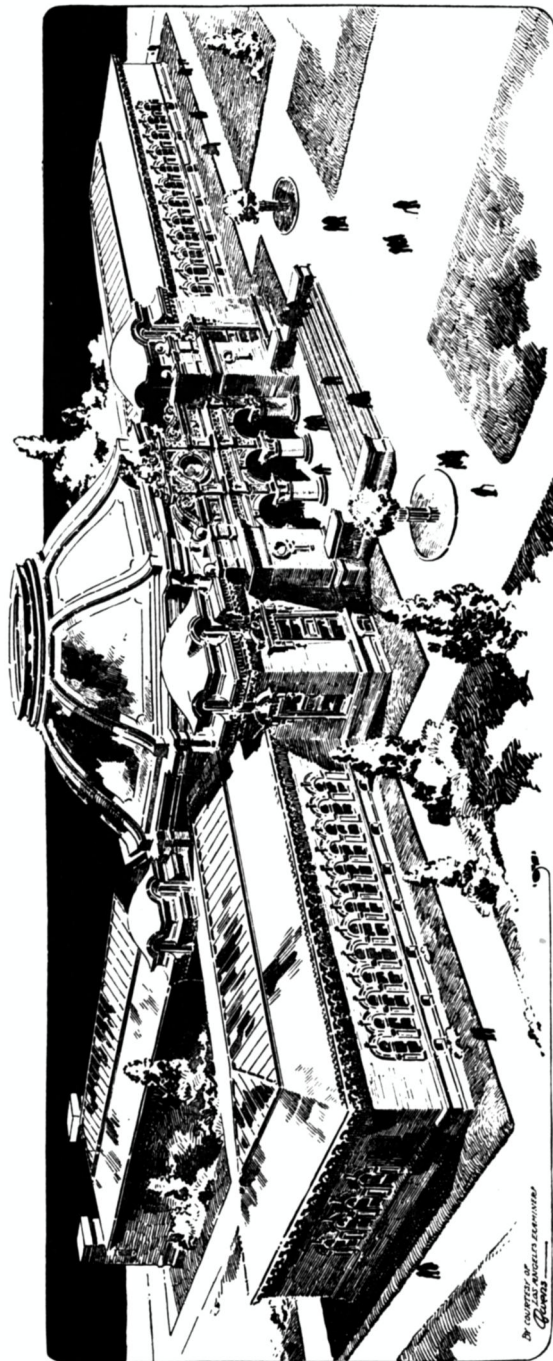
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MUSEUM OF HISTORY, SCIENCE AND ART.

## THE MUSEUM OF HISTORY, SCIENCE AND ART.

BY J. M. GUINN.

The Museum Building is located in Exposition Park, formerly known as Agricultural Park. This park has had a checkered career that is if any thing inanimate can have a career. In 1872, a private corporation purchased a tract of land containing 160 acres, lying at that time about a mile southwest of the city limits, but now within the city, the purchase price being \$6,000. July 3, 1872 the corporation deeded the land to the Southern District Agricultural Society. It was used for a fair-ground and a portion of it converted into a race course for horse racing. In 1873, it was mortgaged for \$5,000.

Evidently exhibiting farm product, prize cattle and race horses did not pay, for in 1879 the mortgage was foreclosed, and in July, 1880, the property was sold on a writ of execution for \$9,190, interest and cost having nearly doubled the original debt. The ruling rate of interest at that time was 15 per cent a year.

In May, 1880, the Sixth District Agricultural Association was formed. A number of public-spirited citizens combined to redeem the property and convert it into fair-grounds. They laid off a portion of it in building lots. One hundred and thirty of these were sold at \$100 each and the money turned over to the Directors of the Agricultural Association to pay off the indebtedness on the grounds.

In 1898, Mr. Wm. M. Bowen, a prominent attorney of Los Angeles, became interested in the park and set vigorously to work to redeem it from the desuetude and dilapidation into which it had fallen, and to clear the title of legal tangles which incumbered it. After considerable litigation all incumbrances were cleared and the title to the park (containing nearly one hundred acres) is now vested in the Directors of the Sixth District Agricultural Association. He secured the promise of funds from State, County and City authorities to erect public buildings and improve the grounds. The buildings designed are a Museum, an Armory, and an Exposition building. It is also designed to lay off a speeding course on the grounds a sunken garden, childrens' play-grounds and lawns and to erect fountains.

The following extract from the minutes of the Historical Society of Southern California for January 16, 1910, gives an account of the inception of the movement to secure the erection of a building for the library and collections of that Society: "Pursuant to a call by the President a meeting of the Board of Directors was held to confer with Mr. Wm. M. Bowen in regard to rooms in the projected Historical, Science and Art Museum to be erected by the County in Agricultural Park."

The meeting was held in Dr. Bovard's office in the Exchange Building, corner Third and Hill Streets. There were present Dr. George F. Bovard, Dr. James H. Hoose and J. M. Guinn. Mr. Bowen met with the Directors. He presented a rough sketch of the proposed building.

It was decided to invite the Southern California Academy of Science, the Fine Arts League and the southern branch of the Cooper Ornithological Society to unite with the Historical Society to interview the Board of Supervisors and ask that Board to appropriate funds sufficient to build and furnish a building for the collections of these societies. The Secretary of the Historical Society, Mr. J. M. Guinn, was instructed to communicate with the officers of these Societies and to ask them to assist in securing an appropriation.

February 14, 1910, Dr. George F. Bovard and J. M. Guinn, who had been elected on the Board of Governors of the proposed Museum Building. Mr. Wm. M. Bowen and representatives of the Academy of Science and the Art League, met with the Board of Supervisors. The Supervisors assured the representatives of the different societies that money sufficient to build and fit up a suitable building would be appropriated.

Mr. Wm. M. Bowen, presented the outline of a plan for the government of the building. The building and the exhibits in it will be under the management of a Board of Governors apportioned as follows: Two from the Historical Society; two from the Academy of Science; two from the Fine Arts League; one from the Cooper Ornithological Society; one at large and the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. The plan was adopted. The following named persons constitute the board: At large, Wm. M. Bowen; Historical Society, Dr. George F. Bovard and J. M. Guinn; Academy of Science, Dr. A. Davidson and Wm. A. Spaulding; The Fine Arts League, Mrs. Wm. H. Housh and T. E. Gibbon; Cooper Ornithological Society, Howard Robertson; Board of Supervisors, the Chairman, C. J. Nellis. Mr. Wm. M. Bowen was elected President, and Howard Robertson, secretary, of the Board of Governors.

Monday, July 11, 1910, the following named members of the

Board of Governors of the Museum of History, Science and Art assembled at Agricultural Park to break ground for the erection of a building: Wm. M. Bowen, president of the Board of Governors; C. J. Nellis, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors; J. M. Guinn, Secretary of the Historical Society of Southern California; W. A. Spaulding, of the Southern California Academy of Science; Howard Robertson, of the Cooper Ornithological Society, and Mrs. W. H. Housh, President of the Fine Arts League.

The ceremonies were brief and were opened with a few remarks by Mr. Wm. M. Bowen, President of the Board of Governors. For several years Mr. Bowen has been working and planning the erection by the County and State of an Exposition Building, a Museum, and an Armory for the National Guard in Agricultural Park. Mr. Bowen introduced Mrs. W. H. Housh, President of the Fine Arts League, who had been selected to break ground for the new building. Miss Louise W. Bowen, daughter of the originator of scheme, handed Mrs. Housh the spade with which she turned the first shovelful of earth for the foundation of the building. She prefaced her action by giving a brief outline of the plan for converting Agricultural Park into an exposition park which will be a thing of beauty and a joy forever.

Concluding her remarks, Mrs. Housh said, "In the presence of these worthy representatives of a great and splendid people and for us all I turn this bit of earth, realizing that henceforth this section of the park will be to us as consecrated ground. For our hearts are in our work, and in spirit we shall be lingering about the place. And now you all, I am sure, will ask the blessing of heaven as we face the sunrise of a new day."

The following description of the building was compiled by Mr. Holdridge O. Collins, Secretary of the Southern California Academy of Science:

"The style of architecture is Spanish Renaissance. The building will be in the shape of a cross, the central portion 75x75 feet, interior finished in octagonal shape and surmounted by a dome eighty feet in height. The north and south wings are each 54x110 feet and the west wing 54x125 feet.

The building is to be entirely fire-proof, constructed of steel frame and brick, faced with tapestry brick laid in varying designs, with terra cotta cornices and trimmings. Steel trusses will support roofs of waterproof concrete slabs covered with Spanish tiles.

The vestibule will have a tile floor and terra cotta walls with ornamental staff ceiling. In the rotunda will be a circular row of sixteen Scagliola columns, two feet in diameter, supporting a balcony. The floor of the rotunda will be tile and the walls of the balcony and main floors will be wainscoted with Italian marble to

a height of twenty feet. The large dome over the rotunda will be seventy feet in diameter and eighty feet high. It will be constructed of steel trusses, supporting a concrete slab roof, the exterior finished in panels and mosaic tile in different shades. In the center will be an art glass skylight twenty-five feet in diameter. The interior of the dome will be constructed of run plaster on metal supports and ornamental staff work.

The west wing will have a cement floor and plaster cove ceiling. All light for this room will come from a large skylight seventy-five feet in length. The north and south wings will be similar to the art gallery, except they will have wood cornice instead of cove ceiling. They will also have suspended reinforced concrete balconies.

At each of the four corners of the rotunda there will be a smaller room, 22x22 feet, on both the first and second floors. Two of these will be used for offices and the other six for special collection rooms. These will also be surmounted by four small domes with mosaic tile exterior to conform to the larger dome.

The entire area under the building will be excavated and a ten-foot concrete basement constructed which will contain two storerooms, heating plant, toilets, etc.

The south wing is to be occupied by the Southern California Academy of Sciences, and the Cooper Ornithological Society, Southern branch, for a museum of Natural History. The north wing will be devoted to the library and ethnological exhibit of the Historical Society of Southern California, and the rotunda and west wing will be devoted to art under direction of the Fine Arts League of Los Angeles."

Hudson and Munsell are the architects. The building will be erected by the County of Los Angeles and will cost when completed and furnished \$250,000.

The corner stone was laid by the Masonic fraternity, December 17, 1910.

At the time of laying the corner stones of the Museum and Exposition Building. Miss Mary S. Bowen, daughter of Mr. Wm. M. Bowen, christened the grounds Exposition Park, using water brought from the head of the great aqueduct now in the course of construction to bring water to supply the city from Owen's River—two hundred and forty miles distant.

There have been two changes in the Board of Governors since its organization, viz., R. W. Pridham, present Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, succeeds C. J. Nellis, who held that position at the organization of the Board of Governors, and A. F. Rosenheim, elected by the Fine Arts League, to take the place of T. E. Gibbon, resigned.